

In the Claims:

1. (currently amended)        A method of preparing a solution of menthyl lactate, wherein the final concentration of menthyl lactate is higher than that achievable by dissolving menthyl lactate in a neat solvent, ~~by~~ by:  
                                      liquefying menthyl lactate; and  
                                      combining the liquefied menthyl lactate with menthol carboxamide and the solvent.
2. (original)    A method according to claim 1, in which the menthol carboxamide is added to the liquefied menthyl lactate and this liquid mixture is then dissolved in the solvent.
- 3.(original)    A method according to claim 1, in which the menthol carboxamide is first dissolved in the solvent, and this solution is then mixed with the liquefied menthyl lactate.
4. (currently amended)        A method according to claim 1 ~~any of the preceding claims~~, wherein the solvent is selected from the group consisting of octyldodecanol, dipropylene glycol, propylene glycol, triglyceride, isopropyl myristate, olive oil, almond oil, hexyl laurate and alcohol.
- 5.(currently amended)        A solution prepared by the method of claim 1 ~~of any one of the preceding claims~~, consisting essentially of menthyl lactate and menthol carboxamide dissolved in a solvent.
- 6.(original)    A solution consisting essentially of menthyl lactate and menthol carboxamide dissolved in a solvent, characterized in that the final concentration of menthyl lactate is higher than that achievable by dissolving menthyl lactate alone in the solvent.

7. (currently amended) A solution according to claim 5 ~~or claim 6~~ wherein the solvent is propylene glycol.
- 8.(original) A solution according to claim 7 wherein the propylene glycol is present in amounts of 25% to 30% by weight of the total solution.
9. (currently amended) A solution according to claim 5 ~~or claim 6~~ wherein the menthyl lactate is present in amounts of from 50% to 60% by weight of the total solution.
10. (currently amended) A solution according to claim 5 ~~of claim 6~~ wherein the menthol carboxamide is present in amounts of from 10% to 20% by weight of the total solution.
11. (currently amended) A food or oral care or cosmetic composition comprising a solution according to claim 5. as defined in one of the claims 5 to 10.
- 12.(currently amended) A method of improving the solubility of menthyl lactate comprising the steps of of:  
liquefying menthyl lactate; and  
combining the liquefied menthyl lactate with menthol carboxamide and the solvent.
- 13.(original) A solution consisting essentially of menthyl lactate and menthol carboxamide dissolved in a solvent.
14. (new) A method according to claim 2 wherein the solvent is selected from the group consisting of octyldodecanol, dipropylene glycol, propylene glycol, triglyceride, isopropyl myristate, olive oil, almond oil, hexyl laurate and alcohol.

15. (new) A method according to claim 3 wherein the solvent is selected from the group consisting of octyldodecanol, dipropylene glycol, propylene glycol, triglyceride, isopropyl myristate, olive oil, almond oil, hexyl laurate and alcohol.
- 16.(new) A solution prepared by the method of claim 2, consisting essentially of menthyl lactate and menthol carboxamide dissolved in a solvent.
- 17.(new) A solution prepared by the method of claim 3, consisting essentially of menthyl lactate and menthol carboxamide dissolved in a solvent.
- 18.(new) A solution according to claim 6 wherein the solvent is propylene glycol.